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Breaking down six months of war with Hamas

HAMAS | April 7, 2024 | Josh Lipowsky — CEP Research Analyst

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April 7 marks six months to the day since Hamas launched the worst attack on Jewish life in a single day since the Holocaust, killing approximately 1,200 people and taking hostage 240 others.

Six months. 183 days.

For six months, 134 of the hostages have remained in Hamas captivity in unknown conditions in unknown locations, without access to the Red Cross or other aid organizations. Their families have received limited signs of life and Hamas has refused to provide the names of surviving hostages. What we do know from investigations and testimony of freed hostages is that Hamas has subjected them to physical, mental, and sexual torture, despite the terrorist organization's lie that the hostages are treated as "guests."

For six months, antisemitic harassment and physical attacks have increased around the world. Watchdogs have reported record-high numbers of antisemitic incidents across North America and Europe. Pro-Palestinian protesters have

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harassed college students, protested cancer hospitals, vandalized kosher restaurants and synagogues, and attempted to shut down major transportation arteries such as New York City's Holland Tunnel and San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge. Chants of "From the river to the sea" not-so-subtly advocate for Israel's destruction by leaving no room for the existence of the Jewish state on the pre-1967 lines or any other borders. These are not actions designed to foster peaceful coexistence or help the Palestinians. They are designed to demonize and delegitimize Israel. These activities are not pro-Palestinian, they are antisemitic.

For six months, Iran-backed Houthi rebels have launched missiles toward Israel and attacked dozens of cargo ships in international shipping lanes in the Red Sea in the name of supporting the Palestinians. The Houthis initially began launching missiles toward Israel shortly after October 7, and then began their Red Sea piracy on November 19, 2023, with the seizure of the British-owned and Japanese-operated cargo ship the Galaxy Leader. The group continue to hold hostage the vessel's 25 crew members, but have since claimed that the crew's fate is in Hamas's hands. The Houthis have repeatedly pledged that their Red Sea aggression will continue until Israel ends its operations in Gaza, a position

that has wrongfully earned the Houthis badges of heroism among Palestinians and Hamas supporters. But the Houthis' actions are not heroic. They can be described only as terrorism.

For six months, Iranian leaders have praised the October 7 attack while denying involvement in it. However, Iran's façade of non-involvement is crumbling. After the deaths of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) commander Mohammad Reza Zahedi and five other IRGC commanders in an Israeli strike on Iran's consulate in Damascus, Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei pledged that Iran would make Israel "regretful." Zahedi is the highest-ranking IRGC commander to be killed since the January 2020 assassination of IRGC Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani in a U.S. strike. A December 2023 report cited an IRGC statement confirming that the October 7 attack was part of a strategy of retaliation for Soleimani's death. Hamas denied the report, stating that the "foremost" reasons for October 7 were "the dangers that threaten al-Aqsa Mosque." Iran also denied the report, but subsequent reports have claimed Zahedi played a key role in helping Hamas plan the October 7 attack.

For six months, the extent of Hamas's callous disregard for

the wellbeing of Gaza's civilians has been on display as Hamas has used the area's population as human shields. Weeks after October 7, deputy Gaza leader Khalil al-Hayya stated outright that Hamas had no intention of governing or improving life in Gaza—it sought only to eliminate Israel.

For six months, Hamas has demanded Israel halt its operations in Gaza and accept a ceasefire—all while rejecting multiple ceasefire offers, including the one it accepted and then broke in November. Hamas rejected another ceasefire offer on April 3, claiming it remains "committed" to all its demands.

Hamas and its allies have not only driven this war for six months, they have also driven the narrative. The international pressure on Israel to end its Gaza operations and accept a ceasefire has grown exponentially in recent weeks, particularly following the accidental deaths of seven international aid workers on April 1. Those deaths are tragic and unfortunate, as are the deaths of any innocents. Six months on from October 7, the world must remember that this is not a war Israel sought out, but it is a war Israel must finish on its own terms or the consequences will be disastrous.

One month after October 7, senior Hamas official Osama

Hamdan confirmed that Hamas would carry out more attacks on the scale of October 7 if given the opportunity. Six months on from October 7, Israel and its allies have a responsibility to ensure that Hamas never has that opportunity again.

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Fact:

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Boston man files lawsuit against white nationalist hate group. Charles Murrell III, a Black educator & musician, was playing his saxophone near a public library last year when Patriot Front members allegedly brutally attacked him during a march.

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